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DHAHRAN SENDS
PARIS FOR ZEYA, LONDON FOR TSOU

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/18/2016

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [SA](#)

SUBJECT: SAUDI SHI'A EXPRESS ANGER AT PRESIDENT MUBARAK'S
COMMENTS

Classified by Acting Consul General Dave Speidel for reasons
1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (U) In the week since President Mubarak remarked in an interview with Al-Arabiyya that Shi'a were "mostly loyal to Iran and not the countries they are living in," PolOff and PAO have asked many of post's Saudi Shi'a contacts about the Shi'a community's reaction. To a person, our contacts said that Saudi Shi'a were angry that Mubarak would question their loyalty and that his statement was the focus of many discussions in community forums and husseiniyas. Several mentioned that many Shi'a had sent e-mails and faxes to the Egyptian Embassy in Riyadh in protest over the remarks. Hassan Al-Saffar, the most prominent Saudi Shi'a cleric and leader, called Mubarak's remarks "unjust and unfair" in several articles on his website. Rasid News Network, which serves as an online forum for the Saudi Shi'a, also carried a number of articles attacking Mubarak; one brave commentator criticized the Saudi government for not making a statement of confidence in the Shi'a community.

¶2. (C) In the words of several of our contacts:

--Kamal Al-Marzouk, Aramco contracting officer: "Mubarak's remarks were very upsetting. The harder we try to build trust, the more someone comes and destroys it. What does he know? How did he come to the conclusion that we are not loyal to our government? Is he senile? We're amazed, amazed he could say such a thing."

--Isa Al-Muzel, elected member of Qatif's municipal council: "His comments have no merit and he was irresponsible to make them. People here have been very angry that someone like President Mubarak would question our loyalty. He has no evidence. Instead, there is lots of evidence of our loyalty. The (Saudi) Shi'a didn't run when Iraq invaded Kuwait; instead we asked for weapons so we could defend our country. Prince Naif recently told us in a meeting that no one of Shi'a background has been implicated in the recent (i.e., post 9/11) terrorist attacks in the Kingdom, not a single person."

--Wajeha Al-Huwaider, writer and human rights activist: "People are very angry, and they should be. But Mubarak is right to some extent; there are some Shi'a, even in Saudi Arabia, who support Iran." (Note: Al-Huwaider was the only one of our interlocutors who said that there was some support for Iran among the Saudi Shi'a. End note.)

--Sadiq Al-Jubran, activist from Al-Hasa: "Yes, we have a religious relationship with marji' and jurisprudents in Iran, just like followers of other religions often have

relationships with religious leaders outside their countries.

But even though our rights are limited here, our loyalties
are with our country and we have proven that many times."

(APPROVED: SPEIDEL)

OBERWETTER